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### They Hold Our Future

If children are the future of the world, then El Paso sure doesn't seem to have a very bright one. Word is El Paso Independent School District (EPISD) is planning to shut down various schools in order for remodeling to take place while also considering the consolidation of some of them. By the district's own admission, schools are operating between twenty-one and twenty-six percent below capacity at the moment, and enrollment rates are projected to drop. The district estimates it will have 5,000 fewer students in the next five years, further contributing to its fiscal problems. However, while this seems to be a legitimate reason to move on with the plans, it seems that not everything is being taken into account.

Closing these schools and consolidating others will greatly affect our community. How? For one thing, we have our children to worry about. The consolidation of schools means bigger classrooms which means a disproportioned ratio of students per teacher, all which will affect the academic standing of each student individually and the academic standing of El Paso overall. Mrs. Jones, a concerned mother of two said, "moving the children from one school to another doesn't only affect the children's stability but also their academic performance because they require individual attention, something they will not get as often with more children in the classroom."

This decision also affects El Paso employees. District superintendent Juan Cabrera said the district has "already eliminated 80 jobs and is looking for more ways to save money before asking taxpayers for more." In other words, El Pasoans are losing their jobs and citizens of El Paso are going to have to pay more money for the current master plan that seems to require around \$852 million in repairs with 12 schools being repaired and another dozen being closed. Board member, Dee Margo, made it clear that the only thing stopping this huge project from happening is they "do not have the financial resources to do it."

EPISD told *El Paso Times*, in a recent interview, that they are also planning the consolidation of schools so that they can go from kindergarten through the eighth grade because it's the trend, but we must ask ourselves if affecting our community in various ways is all worth it just to be in trend. Indeed it's something to think about!

Instead of having such a massive project take place. Why doesn't EPISD focus on putting more money into programs and education all while fixing problems at a much smaller scale? This way, many El Pasoans will not only get to keep their jobs while at the same time avoiding the pay of unnecessary higher taxes, but most importantly our children will have a better opportunity at achieving great academic performance and at reaching their goals which in the end will only benefit all of us because we all know these are our future doctors, nurses, teachers and engineers. They hold our future.